

INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

***The CDBG Program
has always emphasized
the need to involve the public***

- **It's time to let the public know the project is really going to happen!**
- **Be sensitive to the concerns of the public and anticipate them.**
- **Help prepare the local citizens for the changes and explain them ahead of time.**

A public facility project means change:

- **Increases in user charges**
- **Requirements for water meters**
- **Construction disturbances or inconveniences from waterline shut offs, torn up streets, or damaged landscaping**



**A housing project
can mean new
opportunities for
lower income
families for:**

- Weatherization**
- Rehabilitation**
- First-time
homebuyer**
- Rental**
- Senior housing**



**BUT WE NEED TO MAKE
PEOPLE AWARE OF
THE PROJECT!**



- **Keep local citizens informed as the project moves ahead.**
- **If we don't tell the public about what is happening, the "sidewalk superintendents" will -- and usually have it wrong.**

Working with the Media



- **Work with the media to inform citizens about your project:**
 - **Opportunities for assistance**
 - **Progress in completing the project**
 - **Generate enthusiasm**

- **Media reporters are always looking for good stories with community or human interest.**
- **Local radio talk shows or call-in programs can be effective in spreading the word of your project:**
 - Explain complex issues -- like why water meters are being installed or opportunities for housing rehabilitation or first-time homebuyer assistance.
 - Explain programs to pay hook up costs or assessments for low and moderate income families or housing programs that offer weatherization, housing rehabilitation, or financing for first-time homebuyers.

The best way to get coverage is to make it easier for the media to work with you:

- **Accommodate their schedules.**
- **Avoid asking for coverage just before their “crunch time.” Give them plenty of lead time.**
- **Provide background information for reporters or editors via e-mail.**
- **Many radio stations will do public service announcements (PSAs) without charge. Use their preferred format.**



Give newspapers and television reporters photo opportunities that show some interesting physical activity:

- **check presentations**
- **groundbreaking ceremonies**
- **putting up the project sign**
- **interesting or unique construction activities**
- **before and after photos of rehabilitated housing**
- **ribbon cutting ceremonies when the project is finished.**





Give newspapers project progress reports or press releases by e-mail -- so they don't have to retype the text and can easily edit the story.

Press Releases - Announcements



- Use for special events or major developments
- Top of page should contain:
 - Name
 - Office
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - E-mail address

- **Headline should sum up the story**
- **First paragraph not be more than 4 lines long: who, what, when, where, and why**
- **Most important information first (editors typically cut from the end forward)**
- **Keep to one page, double-spaced and one side only**
- **Avoid jargon and acronyms**
 - **E-mail the release and allow plenty of lead time**
- **Keep it short and simple**
- **Use present tense and avoid the words “you” and “today”**
- **Capitalize only proper nouns (names, locations, companies)**
- **Don’t capitalize job titles, agency or department titles**
- **To indicate the end of the release, use the word “end” or the newspaper symbols, “###” or “-30-”**

Project Signs

- ☐ **Most funding programs require the use of project signs.**
- ☐ **Tell the public the purpose of the project and the various funding sources.**
- ☐ **Let people know that something worthwhile is being accomplished with their tax dollars.**
- ☐ **Put up at least one 4'x 8' sign listing the "Montana Department of Commerce, Community Development Block Grant Program" as a funding source.**

- ❑ Signs can consolidate state or federal funding programs.**
- ❑ Locate signs near the site of major project activities, such as a new drinking water or wastewater treatment plant; a new senior center or a housing project.**
- ❑ For community-wide projects, the project signs can be located at the major entrances to the community.**

- Reasonable costs for preparing a project sign are an eligible use of CDBG funds.
- Signs do not have to be professionally prepared to be effective.

TOWN OF SUNRISE

WASTE WATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT PROJECT

John Driscoll, Mayor

CONTRACTOR: XYZ Construction, Inc., Billings

ENGINEER: Clearwater and Assoc., Great Falls

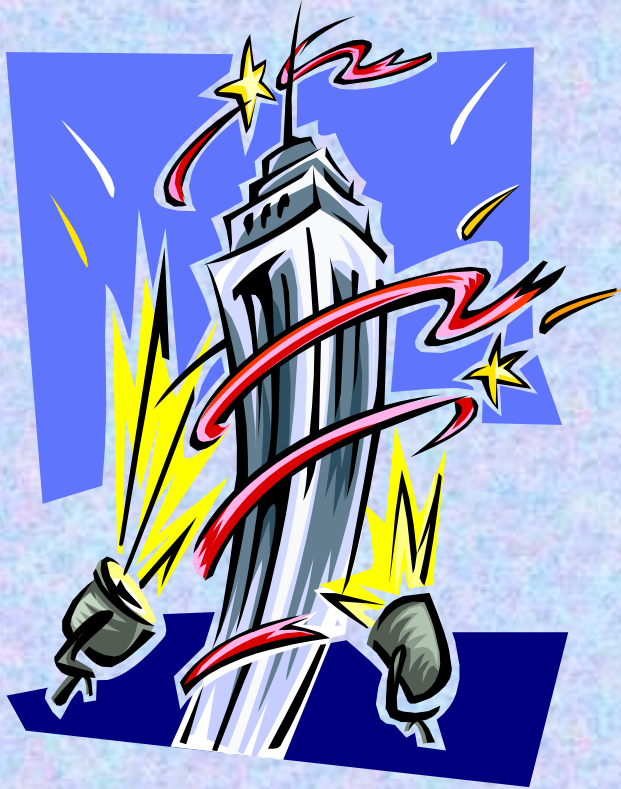
FUNDING:	Montana Department of Commerce	
	Community Development Block Grant Program	\$500,000
	Treasure State Endowment Program	\$500,000
	Town of Sunrise	\$100,000
	U.S. Department of Agriculture	
	Rural Utilities Service	\$1,350,000

"WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A BETTER MONTANA"

Geraldine Project



Special Events



- Special events can be used to let the whole community know about the project's accomplishments and generate community pride and enthusiasm.
- Special events such as:
 - groundbreaking ceremonies
 - cutting the ribbon for the new project
 - open house or tours at the new facility

Butte Check Presentation



- **Invite state officials to participate and cut a ribbon or tour the completed project (the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor).**
- **Invite Congressional Representative or U.S. Senators or their staff to join in the festivities.**
- **Montana's Representative and Senators are always interested in hearing about a federal programs that provides real benefits to Montana communities.**
- **State legislators or candidates where state funding programs are also involved (TSEP).**

Newsletters, Pamphlets and Posters

- Newsletters can be used during the project's implementation to let citizens know more about what is happening with your project – such as increases in the monthly water or sewer rates, the schedule of construction activities (street closures, waterline shutoffs), special meetings, etc.
- Newsletters or pamphlets can be distributed in general mailings or sent to residents along with their water or sewer bill.
- Posters in agencies that serve LMI clientele.



**YOUR INVITED TO AN
"OPEN HOUSE"**

ON THURSDAY, June 23 4 -7pm

At the Garden Townhomes on 123 Colorado Ave.

Catered by Whitefish Lake Restaurant

Current Homeownership Opportunity for First Time Home Buyers!

We are currently seeking two families of 2-3 or more to purchase 3 bedroom town Home unit on Colorado Ave. The family must earn below 80% AMI and be able to obtain a bank loan of no less than \$100,000 to purchase the \$185,000 town home.

Due to a funding source repayment agreement, the Housing Authority will forgive \$15,000 on the first 2 units if the family lives in the town home for 5 years.

Each unit has 1164 square ft of living space and a 1 car garage. The units are 3 bedroom, 2 bath and have full fire sprinkler suppression system. The unit is ready to move in today!

Be Creative

The type of project dictates
how best to inform the public

- announcements in church-bulletins, newsletters for local organizations
- make presentations to local meetings of Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, etc.

Dealing with Complaints



- Complaints come with the territory – someone will eventually be dissatisfied with some aspect of any project.
- The public has a right to express their views.
- Sometimes it isn't possible to satisfy the person, but it is important to try.

- The person receiving the complaint should record:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - Nature of complaint, in writing.
- Assign the complaint to an appropriate individual for resolution.
- Track the status of a complaint until it is successfully resolved – the quicker it is resolved, the better.
- Unresolved complaints typically move up the chain of command.
- The Department of Commerce will not dictate how a complaint should be resolved.
- Congress requires a 14 day turn around for responses to written complaints.

**IN ALL CASES, KEEP A PAPER TRAIL
of the complaints and how they were dealt with!!!**